HOSEA 5

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The People's Apostasy Rebuked	Impending Judgment on Israel and Judah	All Israel has forgotten the Lord and has sought help from other gods and other nations (4:1-8:14)	The Lord Condemns Pagan Worship (4:11-5:3)	Against the Priests and the Royal Family
5:1-7 (1-7)	5:1-7 (1-3)	5:1-2 (1-2)		5:1-2 (1-2)
				The Effects of Obduracy
		5:3-4 (3-4)	Hosea Warns Against Idolatry	5:3-7 (3-7)
	(4-5)		5:4-7	
		5:5-7 (5-7)	War Between Judah and Israel	Brother Wars Against Brother
	(6-7)			
5:8-15 (8-15)	5:8-15 (8-9)	5:8-15 (8-15)	5:8-9	5:8-12 (8-12)
	(10-12)		5:10-12	The Folly of Foreign Alliances
	(13-15)		5:13-14	5:13-15 (13-14)
			5:15	(15)

READING CYCLE THREE (see "Bible Interpretation Seminar")
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3). Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 5:1-7

[1]Hear this, O priests!
Give heed, O house of Israel!
Listen, O house of the king!
For the judgment applies to you,
For you have been a snare at Mizpah
And a net spread out on Tabor.
[2]The revolters have gone deep in depravity,
But I will chastise all of them.
[3]I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me;
For now, O Ephraim, you have played the harlot,
Israel has defiled itself.
[4]Their deeds will not allow them
To return to their God.
For a spirit of harlotry is within them,
And they do not know the LORD.
[5]Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him,
And Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity;
Judah also has stumbled with them.
[6]They will go with their flocks and herds
To seek the LORD, but they will not find *Him*;
He has withdrawn from them.
[7]They have dealt treacherously against the LORD,
For they have borne illegitimate children.
Now the new moon will devour them with their land.

5:1-2 "Hear" See note at Hos. 4:1. This chapter starts out with three IMPERATIVES related to hearing God's message.

1. Hear, BDB 1033, KB 1570, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, "hear and obey," e.g., Deut. 6:4
2. Give heed, BDB 904, KB 1151, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, "listen attentively," e.g., Isa. 10:30; 28:23; 34:1; 49:1; Micah 1:2
3. Listen, BDB 24, KB 27, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, "give ear" e.g., Gen. 4:23; Num. 23:18; Isa. 32:9

These different VERBS are given to show three different groups of hearers:

1. O priests
2. O house of Israel (JPSOA footnote, "prophets")
3. O house of the king

▣ **"Mizpah. . .Tabor. . .gone deep in depravity"** There are three different geographical places mentioned here (matching the three IMPERATIVES and three groups).

"Gone deep in depravity" should be translated by the place name "Shittim" (NRSV, NJB, REB; BHS suggested emendation, cf. Num. 25:1ff).

▣ **"Mizpah"** This (BDB 859) means "outpost" or "watchtower." There are so many towns by this name which are scattered throughout the Promised Land that the exact site is uncertain. However, we do know that it was the site of a sacred pillar which was the symbol of the male fertility god, Ba'al.

▣ **"Tabor"** This (BDB 1061) is a possible allusion to Deut. 33:18-19. Like any other ancient site it was once devoted to YHWH, but now it had become amalgamated with Tyrian Ba'alism.

▣ **"a net"** The term (BDB 440) could refer to a fishing net, but because of the parallel with snares used for birds, it probably means that here (e.g., Hos. 7:12; Prov. 1:17). The priests were trying to ensnare faithful worshipers of YHWH into the amalgamated worship of the fertility gods at YHWH worship sites.

5:2

NASB, NKJV	**"The revolters"**
NRSV, NJB, REB	**"Shittim"**
TEV	**"at Acacia City"**
JPSOA	**"For when trappers dug deep pitfalls"**
LXX	**"which game hunters firmly set"**
Peshitta	**"And the hunters, who hunt have laid hidden snares"**

This (BDB 962) could mean "swerver" or "revolter." However, many scholars assume this line of poetry means ". . .and the pit of Shittim they have made deep" (i.e., another city to match the three IMPERATIVES and three groups of people).

The MT has the VERB "make deep" (BDB 770, KB 847, *Niphil* PERFECT), used in the sense of Israel's low view of the value of human life (cf. Hos. 4:2; 6:9). The same word is used in Hos. 9:9 to refer to the sin and death at Gibeah (cf. Judges 19).

It is also possible to render this line of poetry as "the revolters have gone deep in slaughtering" (BDB 1006). If this is correct then this may refer to child sacrifice (cf. Isa. 57:5 and Ezek. 23:39).

The JPSOA footnote says all of v. 2 is uncertain.

5:3 "Ephraim and Israel" After the Jewish kingdom divided in 922 B.C. the northern tribes were known by the following names:

1. by their capital city, Samaria
2. by their largest tribe, Ephraim (e.g., Isa. 7:9,17)
3. by the collective term for their ancestor Jacob, Israel

▣ **"I know. . .is not hidden from Me"** These two VERBS (#1 BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* PERFECT, #2 BDB 470, KB 469, *Niphal* PERFECT) are parallel to highlight the omniscience of God (on an individual level see Ps. 69:5; 139:15). He knows their idolatry (cf. Hos. 5:3b,c), which is made all the worse because they are His covenant people (cf. Amos 3:2, "you only have I known," NRSV).

▣ **"Israel has defiled herself"** The VERB (BDB 379, KB 375, *Niphal* PERFECT) means "to be ceremonially unclean" by the violation of a Mosaic covenant requirement or prohibition (cf. Hos.

6:10; 9:3-4; Micah 2:10). The "clean" vs. "unclean" theology is seen clearly in Lev. 10:10; Deut. 12:15,22; 15:22; Ezek. 22:26; 44:23).

5:4 "Their deeds will not allow them

To return to their God" This verse personifies Israel's idolatry (cf. Hos. 5:5). Some scholars see this in combination with Hos. 4:12,19 as a personal evil influence.

The people of Israel had become so settled in their evil character (i.e., "spirit of harlotry") that they had passed the point of no return (cf. Hos. 4:17; Ps. 81:12; Rom. 1:24,26,28).

For "return" see SPECIAL TOPIC: REPENTANCE (OT)

▣ **"they do not know the LORD"** The Hebrew term "to know" implies intimate relationship (cf. Gen.4:1). They had no personal relationships with God though they were active participators in religious ritual and liturgy (cf. Isa. 29:13). Lack of knowledge, both personal and covenantal, is the recurrent theme of Hosea (cf. Hos. 2:20; 4:1,6; 6:3,6).

SPECIAL TOPIC: KNOW

5:5	
NASB	**"the pride of Israel testifies against him"**
NKJV	**"the pride of Israel testifies to his face"**
NRSV	**"Israel's pride testifies against him"**
TEV	**"the arrogance of the people of Israel cries out against them"**
NJB	**"Israel's arrogance is his accuser"**
LXX	**"Israel's pride will be brought low against him"**

Some see this as a reference to YHWH because of Amos 8:7, but in this context it refers to Israel's trust in her covenantal status. She was very religious and cultically active. It is this very pride in ritual, liturgy, and form which judged them in two areas:

1. form without true faith
2. faith in the wrong god

"To whom much is given, much is required" (Luke 12:48). This covenant knowledge makes their attitudes and actions even more evil!

▣ **"stumble. . .stumbled"** The VERB (BDB 505, KB 502) is used twice in Hos. 5:5. In the OT God's will for His people was characterized as a path or way. To leave the path or stumble on the way was a metaphor for sin and rebellion (cf. Hos. 14:1).

Often "stumble" is paired with "fall" (cf. Prov. 24:17; Isa. 3:8; 31:3; Jer. 6:15; 8:12; 46:6,16), but also used in a metaphorical sense.

5:6 "They will go with their flocks and herds" Israel tries to approach YHWH through her many sacrifices, but He will not be found (cf. Amos 5:21-23; Isa. 1:10-15; Jer. 14:12; nor His word, Amos 8:12)! The sacrificial system, which was a way for sinful humans to approach a holy God, has been abrogated! The Covenant is broken! They will seek Him but not find Him!

5:6	
NASB, NRSV, NJB, REB	**"He has withdrawn from them"**
NKJV, Peshitta	**"He has withdrawn Himself from them"**
TEV	**"for he has left them"**
JPSOA	**"He has cast them off"**
LXX	**"because he has turned away from them"**

The MT has the VERB (BDB 322 I, KB 321, *Qal* PERFECT which means "to withdraw." This follows the Arabic root. This same root in Aramaic means"despoil." However, in the *Niphal* and

Piel stems it can denote "delivered" (i.e., 2 Sam. 22:20).

I cannot imagine a worse statement than that the Redeemer, Covenant God has now left His covenant people. There is hope (v. 15).

5:7 "They have dealt treacherously against the LORD" The VERB (BDB 93, KB 108, *Qal* PERFECT) is regularly used of a marriage covenant (e.g., Mal. 2:14-16). Here it is used of Israel being faithless to YHWH (cf. Jer. 3:20).

▣ **"illegitimate children"** This could be taken

1. literally, priests and people actively involved in fertility rituals
2. metaphorically, Israel seeking foreign alliances to protect herself from invasion instead of seeking YHWH

▣ **"the new moon will devour them with their land"** Again notice the literary technique of personification. YHWH rejects all of Israel's holy days (cf. Hos. 2:11).

SPECIAL TOPIC: MOON WORSHIP

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 5:8-15

8Blow the horn in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah.
Sound an alarm at Beth-aven:
"Behind you, Benjamin!"
9Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure.
10The princes of Judah have become like those who move a boundary;
On them I will pour out My wrath like water.
11Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment,
Because he was determined to follow *man's* command.
12Therefore I am like a moth to Ephraim
And like rottenness to the house of Judah.
13When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah his wound,
Then Ephraim went to Assyria
And sent to King Jareb.
But he is unable to heal you,
Or to cure you of your wound.
14For I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim
And like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver.
15I will go away *and* return to My place
Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

5:8-15 This seems to refer to the Syro-Israeli war, 735-732 B.C. Israel and Syria rebelled against Assyria and wanted Judah to join in their rebellion. Judah would not, so they attacked her in order to force her to join (cf. 2 Kgs. 16:1ff and Isa. 7:1ff.).

The problem with assuming that the background to these war poems is the Syro-Ephraimatic War is that Assyria mentioned in Hos. 5:13 is sought after by Israel. This does not fit the situation of an Assyrian attack based on a rebellion by Syria and Israel.

5:8 This verse announces the invasion of Israel. God's judgment has come in the form of a foreign pagan nation (Assyria) being His instrument in cleansing the land!

The three cities of Hos. 5:8 (Gibeah, Ramah, and Beth-aven) are to be annexed by Judah (i.e., Benjamin). This may be an allusion to "those who move a boundary" in Hos. 5:10. These cities were possibly taken from Judah by Jehoash (Joash) king of Israel (cf. 2 Kgs. 14:8-14; 2 Chr. 25:17-24).

5:8 "Blow the horn" This VERB (BDB 1075, KB 1785, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) refers to the shophar (ram's left horn, BDB 1051; see SPECIAL TOPIC: HORNS USED BY ISRAEL). It was not used in conjunction with other musical instruments. It was used for

1. cultic events
    a. movement of the Ark
    b. feast days
    c. end-time events
2. military events
    a. approach of an invader
    b. summoning troops
    c. call off an attack

In this context #2.a. fits best (e.g., Jer. 4:5; 6:1; Joel 2:1,15).

▣ **"The trumpet"** This (BDB 348) is a straight trumpet of bronze. It was

1. used with other instruments for worship
2. used to call assemblies
3. used at coronations of the king
4. used to start festivals
5. used for military functions

This context fits #5 best.

▣ **"Sound the alarm in Beth-aven"** The VERB (BDB 929, KB 1206, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE) was used of a war cry, a victory shout, and a horn blast. Here a warning shout fits best.

Beth-aven means "house of wickedness" (cf. Hos. 4:15; 5:8; 10:5). It refers to Bethel ("house of God"), where one of the golden calves set by Jeroboam I was worshiped as an image of YHWH (cf. Amos 5:5).

▣

NASB	**"Behind you, Benjamin"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"*look* behind you, O Benjamin"**
TEV	**"into battle, men of Benjamin"**
NJB, REB	**"we are behind you, Benjamin"**
JPSOA	**"After you, Benjamin"**
Peshitta	**"the enemy is after you, O Benjamin"**

The Septuagint might reflect a different Hebrew tradition, "tremble in fear, O Benjamin." However, the UBS Text Project, p 236, gives the MT (see JPSOA) a "B" rating (some doubt).

1. after you – אחריד (PREPOSITION plus BDB 30)
2. tremble – חרד (BDB 353, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE

The JPSOA translation says, "the three towns name, in the territory of Benjamin, are now being wrested from Israel by Judah, see v. 10."

5:9

NASB	**"Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"Among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure"**
TEV	**"People of Israel, this will surely happen"**
NJB	**"on the tribes of Israel I have pronounced certain doom"**

This reflects the certainty of God's judgment coming to pass (e.g., Isa. 14:24,20-27; 25:1; 46:10).

▣ **"sure"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: BELIEVE, TRUST, FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS IN THE OT

5:10 "The princes of Judah have become like those who move a boundary" Judah took advantage of a time of weakness in Israel and annexed some of Israel's southern territory. The moving of the boundary is an ancient atrocity (cf. Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Prov. 22:28; 23:10; Job 24:2).

5:11 "oppressed, crushed" These are both *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLES (#1 BDB 1075, KB 1785; #2 BDB 929, KB 1206). Here they are used of foreign invaders (cf. Isa. 52:4; Jer. 50:33). These same two terms are used of the economic exploitation of the wealthy (e.g., Hos. 12:7; Deut. 24:14; Jer. 7:6; Amos 4:1).

▣

NASB	**"Because he was determined to follow *man's* command"**
NKJV	**"Because he willingly walked by *human* precept"**
NRSV	**"because he was determined to go after vanity"**
TEV	**"because she insisted on going for help to those who had none to give"**
NJB	**"for having deliberately followed a lie"**
NET	**"determined to pursue worthless idols"**
REB	**"obstinately pursuing what is worthless"**
JPSOA	**"Because he has witlessly gone after futility"**
LXX	**"because he began to go after vain things"**
Peshitta	**"because he willingly went after vain things"**

The problem term is "command" (BDB 846), which is used only here and in Isa. 28:10 (cf. Hos. 5:13). The NIV takes it from another Hebrew root and translates it as "idols" (NRSV, TEV, NJB), which follows the Targums, Septuagint, and Syriac versions.

The UBS Text Project, p. 237, offers four suggestions.

1. "after nonsense" (NEB)
2. "after vanity" (RSV)
3. "after nothing"
4. "after dung" (this is given a "C" rating)

Much of the religiosity of our own day is simply human or denominational tradition and not God's Word (cf. Isa. 29:13; Col. 2:16-23).

5:12

NASB, NKJV, NET	**"moth"**
NRSV	**"maggots"**
TEV	**"destruction"**

NJB	**"ringworm"**
REB	**"a festering sore"**
JPSOA	**"rot"**
LXX	**"confusion"**
Peshitta	**"tempest"**

Literally this is "gnawing worm" or "moth larvae" (BDB 799, cf. Ps. 39:11; Isa. 50:9; 51:8). It was a metaphor of destruction (cf. TEV). God would judge Israel and Judah with worms and rot (BDB 955).

It is possible that the word for "moth" (BDB 799) may be from another root (BDB 799) meaning "waste away," but here of inflamation.

▣

NASB, NKJV, NRSV	**"rottenness"**
TEV	**"ruin"**
NJB	**"gangrene"**
NAB	**"maggots"**
REB	**"canker"**
JPSOA	**"decay"**
LXX	**"a goad"**
Peshitta	**"a lion"**

The term (BDB 955) means "worm eaten." Some scholars assume that "moth" may refer to "maggot eater" as a parallel.

However, in all the other places this term occurs it refers to a rottenness in the bone (cf. Job 13:28; Prov. 12:4; 14:30; Hab. 3:16).

5:13 Both Israel's and Judah's response to God's judgment was to seek help from political alliances with pagan empires, but not repentance and faith toward their covenant God.

▣ **"sickness"** This term (BDB 318) means "disease" or "sickness." It is a metaphor for sinfulness (e.g., see Isa. 1:5-6 and 53:4 for the same concept). This "sickness" was one of the warnings that Moses gave to the people if they disobeyed the covenant (e.g., Leviticus 26; Deut. 7:15; 28:59,61).

▣ **"wound. . .wound"** this term (BDB 267) means "to push out" (i.e., dirt and foreign matter from a wound, to clean). See its use in Jer. 30:13. If a wound was not cleaned and bandaged infection was certain and usually fatal. Israel was so sick and Judah so unclean that death (i.e., God's judgment) and exile were certain. Only God could restore and clean. He would do that if they repented and sought after Him (cf. Hos. 5:5).

▣ **"King Jareb"** This seems to refer to a nickname for Tiglath- pileser III who was king of Assyria. The term means "king pick a quarrel" or "king fighting cock" (BDB 937, "warrior," cf. Hos. 10:6). It can be revocalized to mean "great king" (cf. NRSV, TEV, NJB). A brief listing of Assyrian kings of this period would be: Tiglath-pileser III, 745-727 B.C.; Shalmaneser V, 727-722 B.C.; Sargon II, 722-704 B.C.; and Sennacherib, 704- 681 B.C.

SPECIAL TOPIC: KINGS OF ASSYRIA

5:14 God describes Himself (i.e., "I, even I") as a lion and a young lion in the ferocity of His judgment (cf. Hos. 13:6-8; Ps. 50:22; Amos 1:2). It was not the power of the pagan nations, nor YHWH's impotence that caused the exiles of God's people, but their continuing sin and rebellion. God used these nations (Assyria, Babylon, Persia) for His purposes.

SPECIAL TOPIC: LIONS IN THE OT

5:15 This verse holds a glimmer of hope for repentance and restoration, but it is conditional (cf. Hos. 2:7). It reflects the bad news/good news of Deut. 4:25-31.

▣ **"Until they acknowledge their guilt"** The VERB (BDB 79, KB 95, *Qal* IMPERFECT) means "held guilty" (i.e., guilt due to covenant violations, which demands judgment, cf. Hos. 5:15; 10:2; 13:16; Ps. 34:21-22; Isa. 24:6; Jer. 2:3; Ezek. 6:6; Joel 1:18; Zech. 11:5).

▣ **"seek My face. . .earnestly seek Me"** See note at Hos. 3:5. There are two different Hebrew roots.

1. BDB 134, KB 152, *Piel* PERFECT with *waw*, e.g., Exod. 33:7; Deut. 4:29; 1 Chr. 16:11; 2 Chr. 7:14; Hosea 3:5; 5:6; 7:10; Amos 8:12; Zeph. 1:6; 2:3
2. BDB 1007, KB 1465, *Piel* IMPERFECT, e.g., Prov. 8:17; Isa. 26:9; Hosea 5:15

YHWH pursued them but they would not! Now they must pursue Him!

| Home | Old Testament Studies | Hosea Table of Contents | Previous Section | Next Section |

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